

Grade 8 - Year at a Glance

M/J I Language Arts

A Note to Parents: State standards require your student's language arts teacher to plan lessons that engage students in critical reasoning, build rich background knowledge, and develop deep understanding of complex texts. To achieve these goals, lessons must ask students to read widely from across a vast historical, geographical, cultural, and ideological spectrum. Students will analyze texts in the context of the time they were written and in comparison to texts from other literary periods. Along this journey, students may encounter language, attitudes, themes, or characters they find unfamiliar or difficult. Your child's teachers are prepared for this. They are trained to facilitate text-based writing and discussion that encourage analysis, reflection, and research, not just simple answers. Students are not told what to think. They are encouraged to explore their own thinking and the thinking of others to better understand themselves and the world around them. Every teacher's goal is to create a safe learning environment for all students while actively engaging them in all aspects of literacy. If you are concerned about what your child will be reading in class, please preview upcoming class texts and discuss alternate texts with the teacher if needed. Together we are better!

What is the purpose of this course?

The purpose of this course is to provide grade 8 students, using texts of high complexity, integrated language arts study in reading, writing, speaking, listening, and language for college and career preparation and readiness.

The content should include, but not be limited to, the following:

- active reading of varied texts for what they say explicitly, as well as the logical inferences that can be drawn
- analysis of literature and informational texts from varied literary periods to examine:
 - text craft and structure
 - elements of literature
 - arguments and claims supported by textual evidence
 - power and impact of language
 - influence of history, culture, and setting on language
 - personal critical and aesthetic response
- writing for varied purposes
 - developing and supporting argumentative claims
 - crafting coherent, supported informative/expository texts
 - responding to literature for personal and analytical purposes
 - writing narratives to develop real or imagined events
 - writing to sources using text-based evidence and reasoning
- effective listening, speaking, and viewing strategies with emphasis on the use of evidence to support or refute a claim in multimedia presentations, class discussions, and extended text discussions
- collaboration amongst peers

What will Grade 8 students be expected to do?

English Language Arts Expectations:

ELA.K12.EE.1.1 - Cite evidence to explain and justify reasoning.

ELA.K12.EE.2.1 - Read and comprehend grade-level complex texts proficiently.

ELA.K12.EE.3.1 - Make inferences to support comprehension.

ELA.K12.EE.4.1 - Use appropriate collaborative techniques and active listening skills when engaging in discussions in a variety of situations.

ELA.K12.EE.5.1 - Use the accepted rules governing a specific format to create quality work.

ELA.K12.EE.6.1 - Use appropriate voice and tone when speaking or writing.

Grade 8 Writing Types Expectations

Narrative Writing - ELA.8.C.1.2: Write personal or fictional narratives using narrative techniques, varied transitions, and a clearly established point of view.

Argumentative Writing - ELA.8.C.1.3: Write to argue a position, supporting at least one claim and rebutting at least one counterclaim with logical reasoning, credible evidence from sources, elaboration, and using a logical organizational structure.

Expository Writing - ELA.8.C.1.4: Write expository texts to explain and analyze information from multiple sources, using relevant supporting details, logical organization, and varied purposeful transitions.

Grammar/Mechanics

Skills to be mastered at this grade level are as follows:

- Appropriately use passive and active voice.
- Use semicolons to form sentences.
- Use verbs with attention to voice and mood.

Skills to be implemented but not yet mastered are as follows:

- Add variety to writing or presentations by using parallel structure and various types of phrases and clauses.

Here is a link with a more detailed list and description of the ELA state standards:

<http://www.fldoe.org/core/fileparse.php/18736/urlt/ELAStandards.pdf>

What will Grade 8 students be reading and discussing?		
Quarter	Sample Themes	Sample Texts
<i>The themes and texts below are samples from our adopted instructional resources. Teachers have autonomy to choose/develop appropriate supplemental and alternative texts, lessons, and projects to address the required state standards.</i>		
Quarter 1	Everyone Loves a Mystery: What attracts us to the mysterious?	The Tell-Tale Heart (Fiction) Monster (Fiction/Drama) Let 'Em Play God (Informational Text) Sympathy (Poetry) Ten Days in a Mad-House (Chapter IV) (Informational Text) The Lottery (Fiction) The Graveyard Book (Fiction) The Conjure-Man Dies: A Mystery Tale of Dark Harlem (Fiction) The Monkey's Paw (Fiction) Phineas Gage: A Gruesome but True Story About Brain Science (Informational Text) The Gift of the Magi (Fiction)
Quarter 2	Past and Present: What makes you, you? What makes us who we are?	I'm Nobody! Who are you? (Poetry) Commencement Address to the Santa Fe Indian School (Argumentative Text) Curtain Call (Informational Text) So where are you from? (Informational Text) Slam, Dunk, & Hook (Poetry) Abuela Invents the Zero (Fiction) Inside Out and Back Again (Fiction) Theories of Time and Space (Poetry) The Road Not Taken (Poetry) The House on Mango Street (Fiction) The Outsiders – by S.E. Hinton
Quarter 3	No Risk, No Reward: Why do we take chances?	The Vanishing Island (Informational Text) A Night to Remember (Informational Text)

		Address to the Nation on the Explosion of the Space Shuttle Challenger (Argumentative Text) A Kenyan Teen's Discovery: Let There Be Lights to Save Lions (Informational Text) Mother to Son (Poetry) Learning to Read (Poetry) Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave (Informational Text) The Day I Saved a Life (Informational Text) The Call of the Wild (Fiction) Cocoon (Poetry) The Invisible One (Fiction)
Quarter 4	Hear Me Out: How do you choose the right words? Intrigue. Uproar. Inspiration. Hilarity. Heartbreak. Choosing the right words can have a strong effect on an audience. But how do you know which words are the right words?	/HUG (Fiction) Gaming Communities (Informational Text) Denee Benton: Broadway Princess (Informational Text) Cover Letter to LucasArts (Informational Text) On Virtue (Poetry) Speech to the Ohio Women's Conference: Ain't I a Woman? (Argumentative Text) Across Five Aprils (Fiction) To America (Poetry) Letters of a Civil War Nurse (Informational Text) Gettysburg Address (Argumentative Text) The Adventures of Tom Sawyer (Chapter Two) (Fiction) Blind (Fiction) The Hobbit – by J.R.R. Tolkien
Optional Units Available in Adopted District Resources		
Unit 5 (optional)	Trying Times - Who are you in a crisis? World War II was a time of crisis for many different groups of people. Some faced danger head-on in the battlefields, oceans, and skies. Others, including Anne Frank and Elie Wiesel, found themselves in a different kind of danger. These people and millions of others like them were targets of extreme prejudice. The war changed everything about their lives. Many, like Anne Frank, did not live to tell the tale. Yet, their stories survive. With a genre focus on drama, this Grade 8 unit helps students to understand how times of crisis affect people.	Teen Mogul (Drama) Anne Frank: The Diary of a Young Girl (Informational Text) The Diary of Anne Frank: A Play (Drama) Blood, Toil, Tears and Sweat (Argumentative Text) The Cremation of Sam McGee (Poetry) We Real Cool (Poetry) Nobel Prize Acceptance Speech (Argumentative Text) America (Poetry) Parallel Journeys (Informational Text) Long Walk to Freedom (Informational Text) Refugee – by Alan Gratz
Unit 6 (optional)	Beyond Reality - What do other worlds teach us about our own? What can fantastical stories teach us about our own world? Why are these stories so compelling to readers and writers alike? How can an escape into an imagined reality help us understand our own society?	Manuel and the Magic Fox (Fantasy) The Dark Is Rising (Fantasy) There Will Come Soft Rains (Poetry) There Will Come Soft Rains (Science Fiction) The War of the Worlds (Science Fiction) Everybody Out (from What If?) (Informational Text) What Does American Democracy Mean to Me? (Argumentative Text) Spaceships (Poetry) Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Informational Text)

		How Hare Drank Boiling Water and Married the Beautiful Princess (Fiction) Children of Blood and Bone (Fantasy) I Will Always Write Back – by Caitlin Alifirenka and Martin Ganda, with Liz Welch
How can I help my student to be successful in his/her English class?		
	Support Resources	Everyday Activities
Reading	What Is Text Based Talk? Exploring Texts (Students can practice finding explicit and implicit information in a story, as well as how to make inferences) See FSA Portal for Reading samples and resources!	Engage your student in discussions of current events. Engage your student in guessing or predicting possible outcomes and to give reasons for those predictions. Prompt your student to elaborate on their opinions with “why?” or “how?” Challenge them to consider or refute an opposing opinion. Give your student opportunities to read aloud to you whenever possible (ingredients, recipes, social media posts, news stories, music lyrics).
Writing	Sentence Variety (Help for students in writing sentences with more variety and flow) State your Claim (Students can practice writing argument essays in preparation for FSA writing) Surviving Extreme Conditions (Using Jack London's short story "To Build a Fire," students will gain experience using text evidence in their writing.) See FSA Portal for writing samples and resources!	Encourage personal forms of writing (For example, journal writing, poetry, Youtube scripts, song lyrics, letters, meaningful social media posts, gaming directions, etc.).
Vocabulary	Verbs and Verbals! (This is a comprehensive guide to verbs and verbals with numerous interactive quizzes)	